

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the paper and forest products industry to support their advancement of six sustainability goals.

There are about 18,000 hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in the State of Maine where we have about 40 wood products and paper manufacturing facilities contributing over \$900 million to the economy through jobs and wages and over \$4 billion in industry shipments of products, making the forest products industry one of the largest manufacturing sectors in our State.

Sustainability is inherent to the pulp, paper, packaging, tissue, and wood products manufacturing industry. These products are made from renewable and recyclable resources, and these companies have a good track record of managing natural resources in order to ensure they can continue making useful products in the future.

In 2011, the industry established the Better Practices, Better Planet 2020 initiative pursuing one of the most extensive sets of sustainability goals established for a U.S. manufacturing industry.

By 2020, the Better Practices, Better Planets goals aim to exceed 70 percent paper recovery for recycling, improve purchased energy efficiency by at least 10 percent, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from member facilities by at least 15 percent, increase the amount of fiber procured from certified forestlands or through certified fiber sourcing programs in the U.S. from 2005 to 2020 and work to decrease illegal logging, improve worker safety by 25 percent, with a broader vision of zero industry injuries, and reduce water use in member facilities by 12 percent.

This week the American Forest & Paper Association released their 2016 report on the industry's performance. The industry works with government agencies, communities and other stakeholders to employ advanced sustainability practices benefitting the economy, environment and society and transparently reports on their performance. I am pleased to announce that the industry has met the greenhouse gas emissions and safety goals ahead of schedule.

These companies are committed to sustainability along the entire value chain, starting with the renewable resources they acquire to make their products. AF&PA members procured 98 percent of their fiber through certified fiber sourcing programs and have also increased the amount of fiber procured from certified forestlands to 29 percent.

Also, AF&PA companies are strong proponents of international efforts to suppress illegal logging and to reduce the demand for illegally harvested forest products.

AF&PA's mandatory Environment, Health & Safety Principles require that members have health and safety policies in place. Implementing worker

training, increased automation, and a host of injury preventive measures and safeguards allowed AF&PA members to reduce their incidence rate by 40.8 percent between 2006 and 2014. These companies are committed to continue to look for new ways to reach their aspirational goal of zero workplace injuries.

The industry's purchased energy efficiency improved by 8.1 percent due to investments in energy efficiency projects. Many pulp and paper mills are largely energy self-sufficient, 56 percent of electricity needed to power manufacturing processes was self-generated, and, in some cases, supplying energy to the electric utility grid.

Improved energy efficiency and the use of less carbon-intensive fuels and carbon-neutral biomass enabled the industry to significantly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. These companies reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by 16 percent, surpassing the goal of 15-percent reduction.

Water is a valuable natural resource and a vital component of the paper-making process. The forest products industry directly returns about 88 percent of the water it withdraws and uses in its manufacturing processes. Ongoing technology and innovation enable water to be reused and recycled 10 times, on average, throughout the pulp and paper mill process before it is treated in a wastewater system and returned to the environment. So far, water use at these pulp and paper mills was reduced by 6.5 percent since 2005.

The industry's commitment to sustainability extends beyond the manufacturing process: More than 60 percent of paper consumed in the U.S. was recovered for recycling each year since 2009, reaching a record 66.8 percent in 2015.

Paper recovery success is possible thanks to the millions of Americans who continue to recycle at home, work, and school every day. In 2014, 96 percent of the U.S. population had access to community curbside and/or drop-off paper recycling services. AF&PA works to promote paper recovery by creating materials to educate consumers about best recycling practices.

I ask my colleagues to join us in congratulating this industry on taking steps to improve environmental performance, continue economic progress and support our communities. I am proud of this industry's progress and their continued commitment to advance sustainability performance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUMMER LEARNING

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment today to stress the importance of providing young people with safe places to learn during the summer months. Summer is in full swing, and families are deciding how their children's time will be spent while school is out. Unfortunately, not all families in America can afford en-

riching experiences like summer camps and summer tutors.

That gap between families who have resources and those that do not is expressed clearly in their children. Evidence shows that students who lack access to summer learning, informal or structured, start the school year behind. When many kids are having to review last year's lessons, then all the kids have to spend that time reviewing last year's lessons. This puts all our kids behind.

Simply put, the long summer break should not be a long break from learning.

With Oregon's 4-year high school graduation rate at an alarmingly low 74 percent, it is long past time we shine a spotlight on summer learning loss and its impact on our students' path toward graduation. Summer learning loss has consequences that can damage a child's long-term academic and career success. That is especially important in my State where one in four teenagers doesn't make it to graduation on time.

Research by the National Summer Learning Association shows that most students lose math and reading skills during summer break. And unfortunately, students from low-income families fare even worse. The sad truth is that most students lose about 2 months of grade level equivalency in math computation skills over the summer months, and low-income students lose an additional 2 months in reading achievement.

As parents, community leaders, educators and policymakers, we must provide every resource possible to bridge that gap for disadvantaged and low income students. I have long fought to close the achievement gap and support all students on a path toward high school graduation and beyond.

I know so many great education advocates in Oregon who share these goals, and I want to commend Oregon's tremendous educators who work on this effort every single day. My good friends at Oregon Afterschool for Kids have made a strong commitment to keep kids learning all summer long. Their efforts to open up school libraries and school cafeterias in Woodburn, Salem, Eugene, and around the State have truly made a difference in children's lives by providing them with a safe and welcoming learning environment during the summer. I have often seen parents bring their children for a free lunch and stay for the free books.

This year, I hope to see even more communities come out and support our students by hosting summer learning activities. Even if you cannot attend events to serve lunch and read stories to classrooms full of children, remember that supporting summer learning is easy. Volunteering your time or donating books or crayons to neighbors is another way to support young learners. More ideas can be found in the "Summer Learning Tip Sheet for Parents" provided by the National Summer Learning Association.